

September 9, 1997

For more information, contact:
Kate Whitney - 406-444-3056

THREE NEW EXPANDED CALLING REGIONS TAKE EFFECT IN SEPTEMBER

Local calling areas for Montana customers of U S West Communications who live in and around Billings, Butte and Helena are about to get bigger.

U S West will implement extended area service, or EAS, in those areas in September. As a result, calls that were long-distance calls between towns in those regions will now be local calls. Customers' local phone rates will increase by \$2.55 per month to allow US West to recover its lost long-distance revenue and its costs to implement EAS. However, customers can keep their phone bills close to existing rates or even less if they choose to subscribe to one of the two less expensive measured service options.

Under the basic measured service option, a residential customer's monthly local service rate is \$8.90, plus one cent per minute for outgoing local calls within the EAS region. The other measured-service option provides residential customers with a three-hour block of local calling usage each month for the monthly rate of \$10.40. Outgoing local calls above the three-hour block are billed at one cent per minute.

Customers who want to try out measured service may switch to either of the measured-service options at no charge until March 1998 and switch back to regular flat-rate service at no charge until September 1998.

Towns included in the new regions and the dates EAS will be implemented are:

Sept. 19: Butte - including the existing Butte calling area, plus Anaconda, Warm Springs, Deer Lodge and Whitehall.

Sept. 19: Helena - including the existing Helena calling area, plus Boulder, Townsend and Wolf Creek.

Sept. 26: Billings - including the existing Billings calling area, plus Bridger, Columbus, Fromberg, Hardin, Joliet, Laurel, Park City and Red Lodge.

EAS was implemented in May in the Great Falls area. New regions will take effect in October for the West Glacier, Bozeman and Yellowstone Park areas and in November for the Missoula area.